

March 5th, 2015

Testimony in support of HB 6733 for Paid Sick Days and 6932 for Paid Family and Medical Leave.

To Representative Tercyak, Senator Gomes and the members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Megan Gomez and I work for Dunkin Donuts in East Hartford, CT. I have a son Emanuel(6) and a daughter Ciara (4) who live with me, my cousin Iveliz and my grandmother. I've been employed by Dunkin donuts for over 2 years. I work at two locations East Hartford/Windsor Dunkin Donuts just to be able to bring home a decent paycheck. It is very draining mentally and physically to work at two different locations. I don't have a car so I have to take the bus, which means I get home very late and have to start my day very early.

In addition to the stress of working at two places and juggling my responsibilities, a while ago my grandmother became very ill and I had to take a short leave of absence to take care of her. She was diagnosed with a neurological disorder and she has been receiving treatment. But even with treatment and medication she regularly is not doing well. As a result she sometimes has an extremely difficult time moving around the house and some days cannot get out of bed without assistance. My cousin had to move in with me to help me take care of my grandmother and we also had to hire an aid to help us. Even though my cousin and the aid are helping me, I still have to take a few days a month off to help care for her, take her to doctor's appointments, especially those days that my cousin and the aid are unable to do so. This whole experience with my grandmother been very difficult for me. I work two jobs and I can barely make ends meet to take care of my children. Taking any unpaid days off is definitely a burden on my family. If I did not have my people helping us, I don't know what I would do. I do not think I would be able to take more unpaid days off than I already do.

I recently found out that they were trying to create a program that would allow families like mine to take time off to take care of a loved one without having to think about how I would be feeding my children and I had to speak speak up. I am sure there are many other families that go through the same who are not as lucky as I am to have a cousin that can move in to help out.

I ask that you please consider us when you make the decision to support these bills.

Thank you.

Megan Gomez